

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PALLONE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. PALLONE addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Indiana (Mr. BURTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BURTON of Indiana addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. EMANUEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. EMANUEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. BILIRAKIS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. BILIRAKIS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. (Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GOHMERT) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GOHMERT addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. MCHENRY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. MCHENRY addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Michigan (Mr. STUPAK) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STUPAK addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from North Carolina (Ms. FOXX) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. FOXX addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from California (Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. MILLENDER-MCDONALD addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from New York (Mr. ENGEL) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. ENGEL addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RESTORING ACCOUNTABILITY TO OUR GOVERNMENT

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 4, 2005, the gentleman from Arkansas (Mr. ROSS) is recognized for half the time until midnight as the designee of the minority leader.

Mr. ROSS. Mr. Speaker, this evening on behalf of the 37-member-strong, fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, I rise to talk about restoring accountability to our Nation's government.

As you can see here, today, the United States national debt is \$8,347,371,018,253 and some change. If you divide that number by every living man, woman, and child, including the children, the babies being born today, every citizen of the United States' share of the national debt is \$27,910.

For those of you that have walked the halls of Congress, you have seen this poster outside each of the 37 members of the fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition. The number changes daily. It is staggering. It is our way to try to hold our government accountable for this reckless spending and the largest debt ever in our Nation's history as well as the largest deficits ever in our Nation's history.

Tonight, I would like to talk about accountability. Mr. Speaker, let me just say that under the United States Constitution, which I carry one with me, Congress has an obligation to provide congressional oversight of the executive branch. Congressional oversight prevents waste and fraud, ensures executive compliance with the law, and evaluates executive performance.

However, under the current leadership, Congress has abandoned this responsibility by failing to conduct meaningful investigations of allegations of serious waste, fraud, abuse, and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars. And tonight, on behalf of the 37-member fiscally conservative Democratic Blue Dog Coalition, I rise to hold

this Republican majority, this Republican Congress, responsible for failing to conduct meaningful investigations of allegations of serious waste, fraud, abuse and mismanagement of taxpayer dollars.

Mr. Speaker, by failing to serve as a check and balance for overspending, waste, fraud and financial abuse within the executive branch, this Republican-led Congress has failed the American taxpayer. Every 24 hours, \$279 million of your tax money is being spent in Iraq; and the current Federal debt is \$8,347,371,018,253, much of which is borrowed from foreign countries. Our Nation is spending about a half billion dollars a day simply paying interest on the debt we have already got. A half billion a day.

Many of America's priorities are going unmet because of this reckless spending. Just in my congressional district in Arkansas, I need \$1.5 billion to finish I-69. We could do it with 3 days' interest on the national debt. I need another \$1.5 billion to finish Interstate 49. Again, we could do that with 3 days' interest on the national debt. I need about \$100 million to complete the Hot Springs Expressway. We could do that with just a few hours' interest on the national debt. I need \$200 million to finish Interstate 530. We could do that with just a few hours' interest on the national debt. I need about \$300 million to four-lane U.S. Highway 167 from Little Rock to El Dorado and on past there connecting I-39, 40 with I-20 in Louisiana. I could do that with less than a day's interest on the national debt. We need to four-lane U.S. Highway 82. We could do that with just a few hours' interest on the national debt. These are just some of America's priorities that will continue to go unmet.

Others are making college affordable for young people, ensuring that our young people get the best education possible K-12. Medicaid, Medicare, Social Security, so many of America's priorities are going unmet, are going not fully funded because of the reckless spending going on by this Republican Congress. These massive deficits, this large debt, is forcing much of your tax money to be spent, not meeting America's priorities and improving the quality of life for our children and grandchildren, but rather it is going to simply pay interest, not principal, just interest on the national debt.

Now on top of that, what is happening? On top of that, our Nation is borrowing \$1 billion a day. As I said earlier, we are sending about \$279 million every day to Iraq. But do not ask the President to be accountable for it. Do not ask him for a plan on how he is spending that money, because he will tell you that you are unpatriotic. I disagree with that. I believe that this President, this Republican Congress must be held accountable when they spend your tax money.

About 45 percent of the billion dollars we are borrowing every day is